

The Alamedan



NAVIGATION

Long-sought Cross Alameda Trail underway

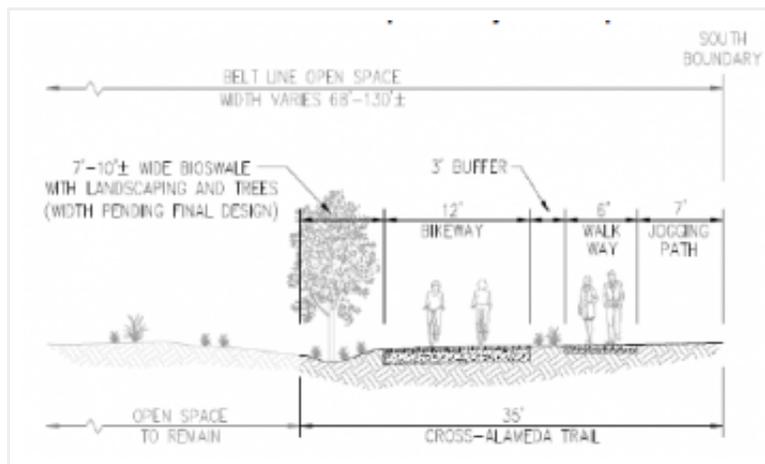
Michele Ellson

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**Image
courtesy of
the City of
Alameda.**

The city
kicked off
efforts to
develop the
first mile of its
long-planned

Cross Alameda Trail with a one-hour community meeting to vet its designs
Monday night.



The Transportation Commission is expected to consider approving a plan for the \$1.8 million walking, jogging and cycling trail segment on September 24, and construction could begin in 2015.

The city has been working toward building the trail – which could one day stretch from Alameda Point’s Seaplane Lagoon to the Miller-Sweeney Bridge and will be incorporated into the San Francisco Bay Trail – since 1991. The segment under consideration would run along Ralph Appezato Memorial Parkway from Main Street to Webster Street, terminating at Webster and Atlantic Avenue, which is where the city’s busiest bus stop sits.

“One of the main purposes (of this is) to get people safely to and from city’s busiest bus stop safely,” said Gail Payne, the city’s transportation coordinator.

The city’s draft concept for the trail segment includes a 12-foot-wide asphalt bicycle path, a six-foot pedestrian path, a seven-foot jogging path, trees and landscaping. City staffers’ original plan included a single path for both cyclists and pedestrians, but a separate path for pedestrians was added after participants in a half-dozen focus groups suggested that each mode of transit should have its own lane.

A portion of the former rail line property that’s being used for the trail is being set aside for a future transit-only lane.

Access and landscaping were some of the top concerns voiced by the meeting’s two dozen attendees. Representatives of the Alameda Community Learning Center and Nea Community Learning Center – the two charters that will occupy the former Woodstock school that sits along the trail route come fall – sought assurances that students would be able to access the trail safely and questioned whether it would impact access to the Alameda Boys & Girls Club next door.

“Every day, we’re going to have 900 kids in and out of there,” said David Hoopes, Alameda Community Learning Center’s lead facilitator. “I’m curious how you’re thinking about incorporating traffic, and how that impacts your plan.”

The trail would be laid over a 35-foot swath now used by the Boys & Girls Club for parking, and could also cut through the lot used by businesses at the corner of Ralph Appezzato and Main.

A representative for the Summer House apartment complex asked whether the city would consider erecting a landscape buffer between the complex and the trail, while another for the Woodstock residential community questioned whether the trees that are proposed to line the unlit route could obscure illicit activity.

Several attendees said they favor separating the cyclists and pedestrians who will use the trail. Cyclist Sally Faulhaber said she has a tough time dodging the strollers she says have “taken over” the Shoreline Drive path, which cyclists, pedestrians and joggers share.

“I’ve seen and heard so many complaints about bicycles on the South Shore sidewalk,” Faulhaber said.

But Peter Wolfe, a landscape architect, said the space should be used for landscaping that would make the trail more attractive instead of a separate pedestrian path.

“I know everybody wants their space, for walking and biking,” Wolfe said. He asked the city to “save seven feet for greenery, to make it more pleasant instead of just a parking lot to go through.”

Focus group participants have asked whether the trail will have benches, water fountains, or dog waste bag stations, Payne said, though she said the city’s budget for the trail is limited.

“We will try to do our best to accommodate all these suggestions with the limited money we have,” she said.

The trail is one of two major bike and pedestrian path projects the city is pushing forward now. City staffers are also working on a cycle track that will line Shoreline Drive, separating cyclists from pedestrians and joggers on the existing path.

The bulk of the funding for the project is coming from the federal government, the Alameda County Transportation Commission and citywide development fees.

Jim Sweeney, whose late wife, Jean, found documents that helped the city acquire the former railway property the trail and a new park will soon occupy for less than \$1 million, said the former rail path was once littered with billboards and broken bottles. He expressed excitement about the trail.

“It took a long time to get a greenway. And now it’s here,” Sweeney said. “It’s a great thing that’s coming for us.”

Anyone who wishes to comment on the design concept for the trail can contact Payne at 747-7948 or orgpayne@alamedaca.gov; additional information about the project is available by contacting Payne and [on the city’s website](#).